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ETYMOLOGICAL NOTES.

1) **M.** *E. bewschers.* This word, so far as I know, occurs only once (*Morte Arthure*, v. 1047). It is quite clear from the context that it must have denoted some part of the body.¹ But I have never met an explanation of the word. Mätzner, in his *Wörterbuch*, p. 215, says: "Wir können das Wort unmöglich als mit dem gleichlautenden unter *bel*, *beau* angeführten identisch und etwa bildlich gebraucht betrachten, auch dürfte es kaum anderswo bis jetzt nach zuweisen sein, als in der angeführten stelle." Perry and Brock translate it by 'buttocks,' Banks (*Morte Arthure*, 1900) by 'the lower parts of the body.' In the Oxford Dictionary the word is translated by 'the buttocks.' The explanation of the word I venture to offer here is by no means certain and is only given for what it may be worth. The word is most probably a compound. I take its first part to be O. E. *bōȝ* 'shoulder, arm,' also 'shoulder of an animal'; in M. Sc. the word meant also 'limb, leg,' and no doubt it had in M. E., at least accidentally, the sense so common in German: "Gelenk, wodurch Schenkel und Hüfte verbunden werden, Hüftgelenk, das obere Gelenk des Schenkels, die Hüfte." It is to be noted that in the *Morte Arthure* the result of O. E. *ōȝ* is often written *ew* (concerning this spelling, see Luick, *Studien zur englischen Lautgeschichte*, pp. 165-182); cf. v. 202 *ynewe*, v. 3366 *bewes* 'boughs,' 1639 *clewes*, etc. I suppose that *bōȝ* appeared originally in a sense akin to that one stated here as rather frequent in German. The origin of the

¹ *Morte Arthure*, v. 1045 ff. :

He (the giant) *lay lenand on lange, lugande unfaire,*
þe thee of a manns tymme lyfte vp by þe haunche ;
His bakke, and his bewschers, and his brode lendes,
He bekas by þe bale-fyre, and breklesse hym semede.

second part of the word is more obscure. One may compare O. E. *scaru* 'groin, private parts'; the original meaning of *scaru* was 'fissure, excavation' and O. E. *bōgscaru* may have meant 'rima podicis,' hence 'one of the two protuberances of the rump.' This is, of course, very uncertain; but if my attempt towards a solution of the problem should make some more palpable explanation suggest itself to the reader, it has not been made in vain.

2) M. E. *brayell* (Morte Arthure v. 793). Perry and Brock have *brathelle*, which they translate by 'brisket.' Banks has *brayell*, no doubt the correct reading, but offers no explanation or translation of the word. The context points to the sense of some part of an animal's body. The word occurs in a passage describing King Arthur's dream before his departure for the war with the Roman Emperor. He dreams of a fight between a dragon and a bear. The dragon assailed the bear, fighting like a falcon with beak and claws.

*The bere in the bataile þe byger hym semyde,
And byttes hym boldlye wyth balefull tuskes;
Suche buffetes he hym receiz with his brode klokes
Hys brest and his brayell whas blodye all ouer.*

In my opinion this *brayell* is the same word as Mod. E. *brail* 'a kind of ligature or fastening.' The only sense recorded otherwise in M. E. is that of 'small ropes fastened to the edges of sails to truss them up before furling;' but in the passage in question the sense of our word is much more akin to its original meaning in O. French, which was 'breech-girdle, waist-belt for keeping up the breeches, girdle, cincture.' I suppose that from this sense the word has come to denote 'the part of the body where the girdle or cincture is placed, the waist.' This sense of the word has in our passage been transferred to a being that does not wear the garment in question, showing that the original meaning has gradually disappeared.

3) M. E. *gowen*, *gawen* 'to look on, gape, stare,' is a Scand. loan-word, from a prehistorical Scandinavian **gawa* = West Scand. *gá* 'to heed, observe.' Related native words in English

are O. E. *ȝe-iewan* 'to show,' *iewan* 'to show, reveal,' *ēawunga* 'openly, publicly,' N. E. *awwnenn* 'to show, declare,' M. E. *taunen* 'to point out.' Scand. **gawa* is formed with the Teutonic *ga-* prefix from the Indogermanic root **ogí-* 'eye,' Teutonic **awi-*. I refer, for further details, to my article on W. Scand. *gá* in *Nordiska Studier, tillegnade Adolf Noreen på hans 50-årsdag den 13 Mars, 1904* (Upsala, 1904), p. 169 ff., where the words in question have been treated in full.

4) M. E. *irspil* (gen. *irspilles*) 'a hedgehog' A. R. 418. The correct form is, no doubt, *iles-pīl*, see N. E. D., Stratm-Bradley. Ms. T has *ylesipes*, ms. C. *ylespilles*. The form *irspil* is hardly anything else than a mere scribal error, very easily accounted for as due to the influence of the synonymous M. E. *irchoun* (Mod. E. *urchin*).

5) Mod. E. *lad* 'a youth.' It is not my intention to offer any new explanation of this word. I only wish to call attention to Norw. *-ladd* in *tusseladd* 'one who walks clumsily,' *askeladd*, *oskeladd* 'the youngest of several brothers' (= *askefise*, Scand. *Loan-words*, p. 135). Falk and Torp, *Etymol. Ordbog*, p. 439, say with regard to the Norw. word: "maaske laant i eng. *lad* 'gut.'"

6) M. E. *līðe*, *lythe* 'people, subjects, vassals.' In my book on Scandinavian loan-words, p. 114 ff., I have enumerated some M. E. words in which *ī* is a reliable criterion of Scandinavian origin. All these words contained the diphthong *iu* in pre-historic Teutonic times and this diphthong when liable to *i*-mutation in Scandinavian, became *ȳ*, whence M. E. *ī*, whereas the corresponding native sound-development was M. E. *ē*. To the material collected in the quoted passage of my treatise two additions are to be made: 1. M. E. *tīte* 'flaw, vice,' see Scand. *Loan-words*, p. 296 and foot-note 1. 2. M. E. *tīthe* 'people, subjects, vassals.' In the N. E. D. the word is said to be "of somewhat uncertain origin, most prob. an O. N. *lýðr* 'people, vassals collectively,' but it may wholly or partly be a use of *lith* 'body of men, help, remedy.'" I am fully convinced of the etymological identity of O. E. *lēode*, M. E. *lēde* (native) and

M. E. *lǣde* (Scand. loan-word). There is one fact which especially favors this assumption. In M. E. there are many instances known of *lēde* used alliterating with *land* (see N. E. D., Mätzner); the identity of *lēde* and *lǣde* is rendered more than probable by the fact that *lǣde* only occurs in alliterative phrases where the other word is 'land.' Also in Scandinavian such alliterative phrases are known: cf. *stjórn, lýðs ok lands* (Fritzner²). In this connection attention may be called to the fact that also the English word was introduced into Scandinavian, viz. in the compound *lǣdbiscop* 'bishop of a district'; *lǣd* became here 'Scandinavianized' into *lýð, lióð* in O.W. Scand. *lýðbiskup, lióðbiskup*, O. Swed. *lypbiskoper*; cf. Taranger, *Den Angelsaksiske Kirkes Indflydelse paa den norske* p. 226.

7) Mod. E. *reel*. In the above-mentioned *Nordiska Studier*, p. 174, I have ventured an explanation of Mod. E. *reel*, O. E. *hrēol*. I consider the prehistorical English form to have been **hrōhila*, which became by *i*-mutation **hroehil* > **hrēhil*, and later, owing to the interchange of the suffixes *-il* and *-ul*, *hrē(h)ul*, whence O. E. *hrēol*. Professor Pogatscher kindly calls my attention to the very striking analogue offered by O. E. *eosol* in which *e*, due to *i*-mutation of *a* (in **asil* > **esil*), was subsequently liable to *u*-mutation, **esil* having become **esul*, owing to the above-mentioned interchange of the suffixes *-il* and *-ul*.

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